

Criteria Menu #8

Participate in the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service program, HealthierUS Challenge.



Definition: HealthierUS Challenge is a structured program that recognizes schools for improving their nutritional environment, improving the quality of food served, and providing students with more nutritious, healthy choices. To be certified as a HealthierUS Challenge school your school must complete criteria such as:

- Be enrolled as a Team Nutrition School
- Offer reimbursable lunches that demonstrate healthy menu planning practices and principles of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and that meet USDA nutrition standards
- Provide nutrition education to students
- Provide students the opportunity for physical activity
- Maintain an Average Daily Participation of 70 percent or higher of school enrollment for reimbursable lunches
- Adhere to guidelines established by FNS for foods served/sold in schools outside the National School Lunch Program.

Resources

HealthierUs School Challenge

<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/HealthierUS/index.html>

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Assignments

School Coordinator Assignments

- Enroll school as a Team Nutrition School
- Determine which criteria your school has already met and which criteria the school will need to meet (many of the criteria are the same as Gold Medal Schools criteria)

Mentor Assignments

- Help school coordinator submit application for completion of HealthierUS Challenge
- Provide school coordinator with ideas/resources for meeting the HealthierUS Challenge
- Write a description for the mid-year and end-year reports



Criteria Menu #8 Ideas

- Make a chart to show the school's progress towards becoming a certified HealthierUS school
- Celebrate when the certification is complete
- Involve students when making changes in the cafeteria. Ask them which nutritious foods they like best



HealthierUS Challenge Description Template

A description must include specific details describing how the school completed the criteria. If you are writing a description for criteria that the school achieved in previous years please include a description of what the school is doing **this year** to maintain that level not what they did in previous years.

A Gold Medal Schools description does not require an Intent, Rationale, Reinforcement or the principal's signature. Use this template to write your description (all information is required).

A sample description for this criterion is provided on the next page.

The description must include...

- ❑ A description of the process the school went through to become a HealthierUS Challenge School



HealthierUS Challenge Description

Green Meadow Elementary became certified as a Gold HealthierUS School. First a panel was organized to review Green Meadow's standards against the HealthierUS School Challenge standards/criteria. The panel included: the foodservice manager, the Team Nutrition Leader, the principal, the foodservice director, a PTA member, the school nurse, and the physical education teacher. The school completed the following criteria to meet the HealthierUS standards:

- Enrolled as a Team Nutrition School
- Offered reimbursable school lunches meeting the USDA nutrition standards
- Offered reimbursable lunches demonstrating healthful menu planning, principles of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, and met menu criteria provided by HealthierUS
- Provided nutrition education in the classroom
- Provided physical education to every grade
- Average daily participation was 75% of school enrollment for reimbursable lunches
- Food or beverage, other than reimbursable lunches, was not sold throughout the school day
- Fresh fruit, raw vegetables, and whole grain food were offered for reimbursable lunch each school day

After completing the criteria the school's self-assessment application was completed and signed by the panel and submitted to the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program in Utah. After approval we received a plaque and Green Meadow was placed on the USDA's Team Nutrition Web site.